

Fowey Fables – No.34

January 2015

A few months ago I was very privileged to be invited to speak to a church of young Chinese currently living in Auckland. Most of them are university students who have not long known Jesus and who show a huge enthusiasm to share Him with their friends. I was asked to speak on the theme of ‘To be a true follower and disciple of Jesus Christ.’ Because they are Mandarin speaking I spoke through an interpreter which went well, although my jokes do not always translate.

Somewhere in the middle of the previous night the thought came to me to speak on the 7 ‘Cs’ of being a disciple of Christ. In retrospect I realized that my 7 words probably did not begin with C in Mandarin but I would like to share them with you anyway.

Discipleship begins with **conception**. As Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit,(Lk.1:31) we must also be born again.(Jn.3:3,6) This happens at the moment when like Jesus’ first disciples we leave everything to follow Him.(Matt.4:19-22) This determines for eternity who we are, His children.

Birth needs immediately to be followed by **caring**. Spiritual birth equally needs to be followed by devoted care. Paul the apostle described himself as ‘gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.’(I Thess.2:7) We have had a beautiful example in Tracey and Nick as they care for our granddaughter, Eva. They are certainly gentle, keep very close, feed and change nappies at all hours of the day and night. And she is flourishing as a result of this. So do baby Christians if we are as devoted to their one to one care. This is how growth starts.

Very early in a child’s life he or she starts to learn, at first by imitation. For the young Christian this should be a matter of **co-education**, not boys and girls together in the same class, but the task of teaching the word of God with Christ and us being the co-teachers. We are to start the process of teaching but as quickly as possible introduce the student to the real Teacher. I Jn.2:27 emphasises how His anointing teaches us about all things and is true so we have no need for anyone else to teach us. The name ‘Christ’ literally means ‘the Anointed One’. All we have to do is to abide in Him, which means to relax and rest confidently as we listen to Him with our Bibles open. The more we mature as Christians, the more those who know us should recognize that we are children of our Father in heaven. Jesus gave teachers a solemn warning that ‘everyone when he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher.’(Lk.6:40) If I am the teacher, the result will be a miserable shadow of the real thing which would have happened if Jesus Himself had been allowed to be the Teacher producing people like Him.

As a child grows everyone tries to decide which parent he or she resembles most. As Christians grow we are ‘predestined to become **conformed** to the image of His Son.’(Rom.8:29) Later in Romans 12:2 Paul goes a step further to describe how as we present ourselves more and more to Him we will be transformed, changed from the inside.

Disciples were intended to be a team not just high performing individuals. Great teams need **coaching**. Paul describes Christian coaching and its potential outcome in Eph.4:11-14. A variety of talking coaches combine to build the body of Christ which comes more and more

to resemble a full grown Jesus instead of a bunch of kids who are up and down according to which way the wind is blowing.

When things go wrong for the team members how are we to **correct** them? Most of us have an opinion on how someone else should behave. When we express our view most of the time nothing changes except possibly when the other person knows we are watching. The Lord has a simple answer. His word alone truly corrects when taught and applied by the Holy Spirit. Again it was Paul who set out the plan, 'All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.'(II Tim.3:16) Reproof is the idea of conviction as the result of presenting the evidence. Correction follows on with His solution, as He forgives and changes us. II Tim.4:2 demonstrates how to apply the word to a problem of behaviour, by preaching the word, whether people are ready to listen or not, but doing so with great patience. We are usually in too much of a hurry.

Finally as disciples we have a **commission**. Jesus gave us a simple plan, to make disciples of all nations, baptizing and teaching them. The secret of success is that we have His authority and His presence. It is His plan and He will carry it out in and through us.(Matt.28:18-20)

Bible school at Fowey Lodge continues. Our numbers are not great but the hunger of those who come is exciting. As usual we have had a mixture of residential students and those who join us by the day. We often wonder whether there is anything we could do to increase numbers in the lecture hall. Over the years word of mouth has been the only effective way so we assume it still is. Overseas students can no longer enter NZ on student visas but they can still come as visitors, or if they can qualify for a work permit, be part time students. An interesting development is that several regular local study groups are wondering about joining us for one session a week for a topic in the programme which suits them. This could be part of the plan for the future. We would love to hear your ideas. Our new term starts on Monday 9th February. Join us!

If you have not visited our website, www.foweylodge.com lately we would encourage you to do so. Pete and Tracey have put a lot of hard work into redesigning it because we realize that on-line teaching will become more and more the way of the future. Again we would value your ideas, but please don't be polite when you can see we have got something wrong. Constructive criticism is so helpful. A joint family idea which Tracey is leading is to host events such as children's parties and weddings at the Lodge. It can be a witness to the community of how the best way to do anything is with Jesus in the centre. There is a new website www.foweylodge.org as a way of introducing people to what we are offering. Again tell us what you think, and if you like it pass the word on. This plan has given us the opportunity for a major facelift of the grounds and the student buildings which we know will help Bible school as well.

Pete is hoping to move up to Auckland within the next year to be able to be more practically involved. He has an amazing new piece of equipment, a helicopter drone with a high quality camera with which he can take aerial photos. It will help him towards earning a living and can certainly be part of the events at the Lodge.

Nick is enrolling again at university for next year to study Law while continuing to work with us. Tracey is a great support to him and to us. Eva is crawling fast, talking more, singing songs and making funny faces. Wow, are we enjoying grandparenthood!

We had a great summer camp at Mangakino in the middle of the North Island for 8-15 year olds over the New Year weekend. Asbjorn and Sue were our hosts in their lovely home. We are as keen as ever to keep running youth camps because we have seen how it is often a turning point in kids' lives. Share your ideas with us.

We had another Bible Conference late in October. It was videoed and will be available on Youtube shortly. Watch our website for details.

Dick Park who has been part of the ministry at the Lodge almost since the beginning has just published a great little book on the Beatitudes of Matthew chapter 5. His title is 'The Great Reversal'. Because it is written by Dick it is refreshingly different. It is not yet in the bookshops but let us know and we will use our influence to get you a copy.

We have recently had great visits from Emil and Renata, originally from Czechoslovakia who were students 21 years ago. It was so good to hear how the truth in Christ has been life changing for them. We have also enjoyed seeing Pat and Marlys from Canada but lately living in Australia who lived at the Lodge between 16 and 12 years ago. They are coming back again soon to be part of what we are called to do. Isn't life exciting?

We always love to hear from you.

Our very best wishes in Christ,

Tony and Christine